

Furthermore, we want more than the “right” to an abortion. The “right” to drive 12 hours to pay for an expensive procedure after losing wages or even your job is not a real “right.” This is why the IMT fights not only for full reproductive rights up to and including abortion, but for universal access to such services if chosen, in safe conditions, in hospitals, free at the point of service as part of a national, socialized health care system.

But healthcare is just one aspect of this question. The need for abortion would dramatically decrease if the social conditions that engender poverty and hunger for millions were abolished. The reactionaries who oppose a woman’s right to decide what to do with her own body are fanatically concerned with the right to life before birth—but they could care less about the right of people to live a decent life outside the womb.

Declining living standards in a world of instability has made the prospect of child bearing and rearing a nightmare for millions, and an unplanned pregnancy often means a life sentence of poverty and marginalization for both the parents and children.

That is why we must link the demand for abortion rights with a broader working-class program for well-paid jobs for all; free, quality education and daycare facilities; affordable housing capped at no more than 10% of a person’s income; public laundry services and subsidized restaurants serving quality food; and much more.

Although we can win some reforms under capitalism, these will always be limited and in danger of being rolled back until we establish a government of, by, and for the working class. Ultimately, only the building of a new society under a workers’ government can lay the basis for a new stage of human development in which women can freely choose what to do with their bodies—free from all economic, political, religious, or social pressures or compulsion.

SUPREME COURT ASSAULTS ABORTION RIGHTS



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FIGHT BACK WITH CLASS STRUGGLE!

Another unprecedented bombshell has rocked the polarized world of American politics and class struggle. In a leaked internal memo drafted by Supreme Court Justice Samuel Alito, the majority of that reactionary body outlines its case for the judicial overturn of *Roe v. Wade*. As part of the cynical maneuvering by a segment of the ruling class to divert the class war into the so-called “culture war,” the fundamental right to abortion will be unceremoniously trashed. Virtually overnight, tens of millions of women living in a majority of US states would be thrust into the barbarism of an earlier century.

Without federal protection of this basic right, pregnant women who choose to have an abortion will be forced to rely on unsafe and unregulated providers, risking their lives, savings, and livelihoods to access the procedure. Of course, wealthy women can find a way to terminate a pregnancy, traveling out of state or out of the country as needed to pay for high-quality private doctors. But for poor and working-class women, it is another story altogether. This is the grim reality faced by billions of women worldwide. But even in the richest country on earth, the forces of capitalist reaction threaten to drag society into a dark age.

Abortion was first made illegal in the US between 1820 and 1870, in the context of the institutional patriarchy and sexism of American capitalist society. In the 1960s and 1970s, the civil rights movement, anti-Vietnam War movement, LGBTQ struggles, and general social ferment helped push forward the movement for abortion rights. This culminated in 1973 with the historic decision that ruled that the US Constitution protects a pregnant woman’s liberty to choose to have an abortion without excessive government restriction.

However, even the most basic democratic rights are always at risk as long as the capitalists are in control, and almost immediately, the extreme right launched a counterattack. Ever since, abortion has been a polarizing question used by politicians as election-year fodder. Before the 1970s, conservative politicians could reliably lean on the racism of their white Evangelical voter base by openly supporting segregation. After the civil rights movement weakened this position, these politicians needed a new



way to rope in these voters, and they found an emotional lightning rod in the form of anti-abortion policies.

As for the Democrats, they have played a pernicious role in allowing the rolling back of abortion rights and access over the last few decades. After *Roe v. Wade*, hospital administrators argued that providing abortions in their facilities would swamp them with new patients. In response, liberal reproductive rights advocates connected to the Democrats argued in favor of a network of separate, private, stand-alone abortion clinics. This created stigmatized areas that could be easily targeted by anti-abortion picketers and right-wing terrorists, giving the private hospitals even more of an excuse not to provide these services.

The segregation of abortions and related procedures from general healthcare laid the basis for decades of state-imposed “TRAP laws” to restrict access. It also allowed for a perpetual back and forth over this question during election cycles. Being “for” or “against” abortion has been used to bully people into supporting either the Democrats or Republicans, neither of which defends the interests of the working class.

For example, in 1973 Biden said he did not believe that “a woman has the sole right to say what should happen to her body.” And in 1977, he used his political weight to block federal funding of abortions specifically in cases of rape and incest. During their election campaigns, both Obama and Biden made promises that they would sign the right to abortion into law—but failed to deliver even with the Democrats controlling the House, the Senate, and the White House.

This all begs the question: why are the life outcomes of millions determined by a small handful of unelected judges? Where has “lesser evilism” gotten us? The right to choose what one does to one’s body is a basic democratic right. In that sense, the IMT defends *Roe v. Wade*. But such a right should not hinge on unelected justices, courts, and other officials—or on the subjective, changing interpretation of a document drafted over 200 years ago by rich, male, white property owners to accommodate a minority of slave owners.